Banyule Futures – Survey and pop-up findings report by precinct

North East Precinct
(Briar Hill, Eltham, Eltham North, Montmorency, St Helena)

128 people participated in North East Precinct engagement activities, including 83 who completed surveys and 44 who participated in pop-ups at Were Street Reserve Montmorency on 1 June 2024 and one primary-age child who drew a picture.

Of the 118 people who provided gender and age information, **Figure 40** shows that while there was some diversity in the gender of participants, people who identified as woman or female represented 69% of the total. Different to other precincts, **Figure 41** shows that age representation in North East Precinct is more evenly spread across age groups 35 and older, compared to others that are more skewed to the 35-49 years category.

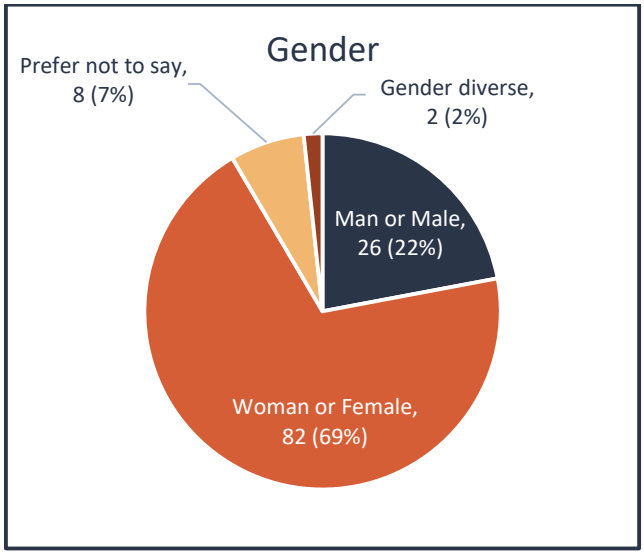


Figure 40 – North East Precinct participant gender

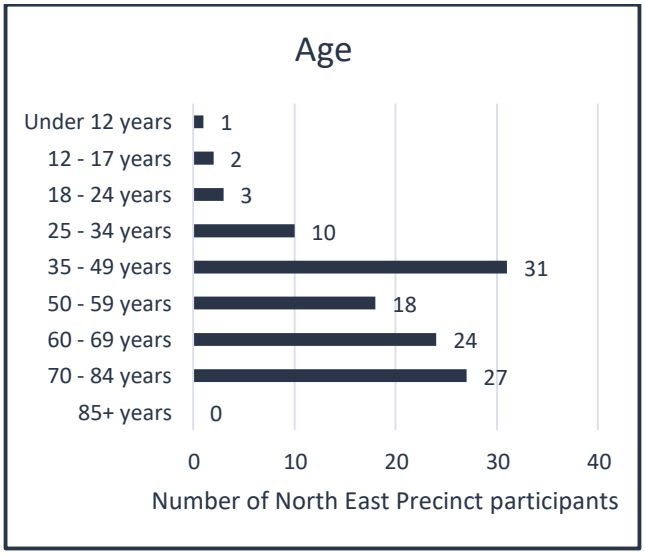


Figure 41 – North East Precinct participant age

10 people who live with disability, **8** who identify as LBGTIQA+, **2** who speak English as a second or other language and **13** carers completed the North East Precinct survey. There was no participation of people who identify with an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background.

1. What do you love about North East Precinct?

125 responses were received for the question 'What do you love about North East Precinct (Briar Hill, Eltham, Eltham North, Montmorency, St Helena)?' A number of themes were identified during analysis of these responses.

1. **Nature and environment**

Respondents said that they love the trees, greenery and natural environment of North East Precinct. There is also a strong appreciation for the presence of wildlife, green spaces, parks and walking trails, suggesting an appreciation for the outdoors and nature.

2. **Community**

A number of people noted that North East Precinct is welcoming and that there is a strong sense of community. The village atmosphere and 'small-town feel' contribute to the area's charm.

3. **Safety and accessibility**

People said they feel safe and like that the area is clean. Proximity to services, transport and recreational areas came through as things that people like about the area**.**

4. **Local amenities and facilities**

Local shops, particularly Were Street, were praised. Amenities like playgrounds, sports facilities and community gardens are highly valued.

5. **Cultural and social aspects**

Respondents said that they love the cultural and social events that take place in the area, and noted efforts to include everyone, particularly anti-racism efforts.

2. Priorities

The following priorities were presented to participants as part of the North East Precinct survey and pop-ups to gauge people's level of agreement with what we understand from the Living in Place survey data.

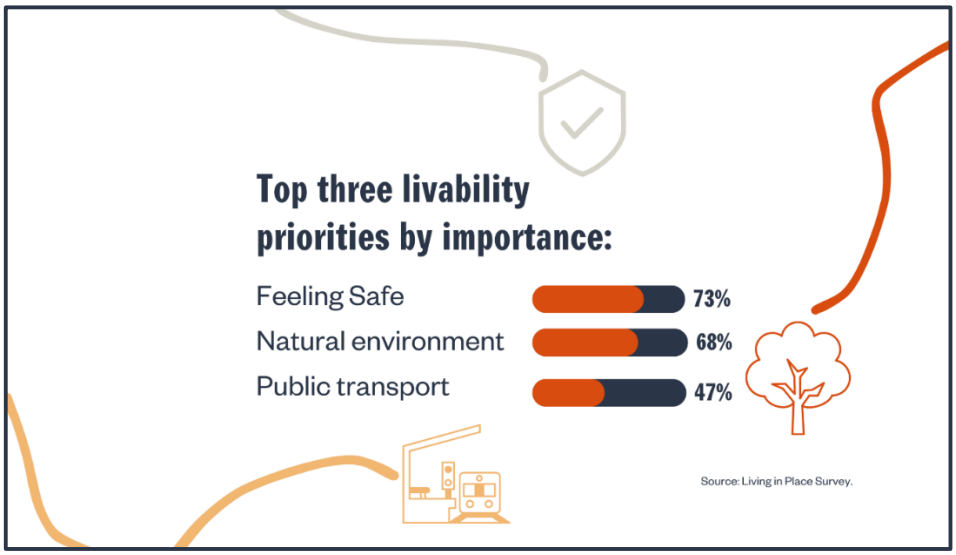


Figure 42 - North East Precinct priorities

Of the 114 people that responded to this question, 72% (82) agreed or strongly agreed with these priorities for North East Precinct, 24% (28) disagreed or strongly disagreed and 4% (4) did not know or could not say.

Level of agreement	Percentage (number)
Agree or Strongly Agree	72% (82)
Disagree or Strongly Disagree	24% (28)
Don know/can't say	4% (4)

Figure 43 - level of agreement, North East Precinct priorities

Agree or Strongly Agree

Of the 72% of respondents that agreed or strongly agreed with these priorities for North East Precinct, the importance of **safety** was emphasised with some concerns around rising crime rates, particularly burglaries and car break-ins. Suggestions were made to improve lighting, CCTV and policing to enhance safety. Some people noted that they take active steps to stay safe by avoiding particular areas.

It was agreed that the **natural environment** is a top priority and for some people, more important than safety, with trees, parks and green spaces highly valued. Similar to other precincts, there is a strong desire to preserve the natural environment and maintain the area's green character. There was some concerns about litter detracting from the natural beauty of the area.

Reliable and accessible **public transport** is important, particularly for those who commute. There is opportunity to improve bus shelters, increase frequency of services and enhance accessibility for wheelchairs and prams. Some people had the view that improving cycling and walking infrastructure would reduce car usage and promote **sustainable transport**.

In addition to the priorities presented, there was a sense amongst respondents that **community connection** through community-building activities and opportunities for people to connect is a priority. Part of this is ensuring accessibility for people of all ages and promoting inclusivity.

Disagree or Strongly Disagree

While some people agreed that **safety** is important, many said that they already feel safe in the area. Some people spoke about personal issues with break-ins and people speeding on the roads.

A number of respondents ranked **natural environment** above feeling safe. Similar to those that agreed, it was felt to be important to preserve and maintain green spaces and enhance the natural environment for overall wellbeing. This priority, including air quality, was seen to have a strong connecting with health benefits.

People commented that the definition of **public transport** should include general connectivity, such as walking and bike paths, which needs to be improved.

Community services and infrastructure were also raised by this group as an important priority for North East Precinct. Concerns were raised about the inability of roads and public transport to keep up with population growth. Access to **affordable housing** was also considered part of this additional priority,

While the general sentiment was to agree with the priorities, some people suggested different rankings and other priorities such as education, affordable housing and healthcare.

Don't know/can't say

Of the 4% that did not know or could not say their level of agreement, there was a sentiment that Council should focus on local issues and that public transport as an issue is overrated amongst Councils.

3. Concerns

The following concerns were presented to participants as part of the North East Precinct survey and pop-ups to gauge people's level of agreement with what we understand from the Living in Place survey data.

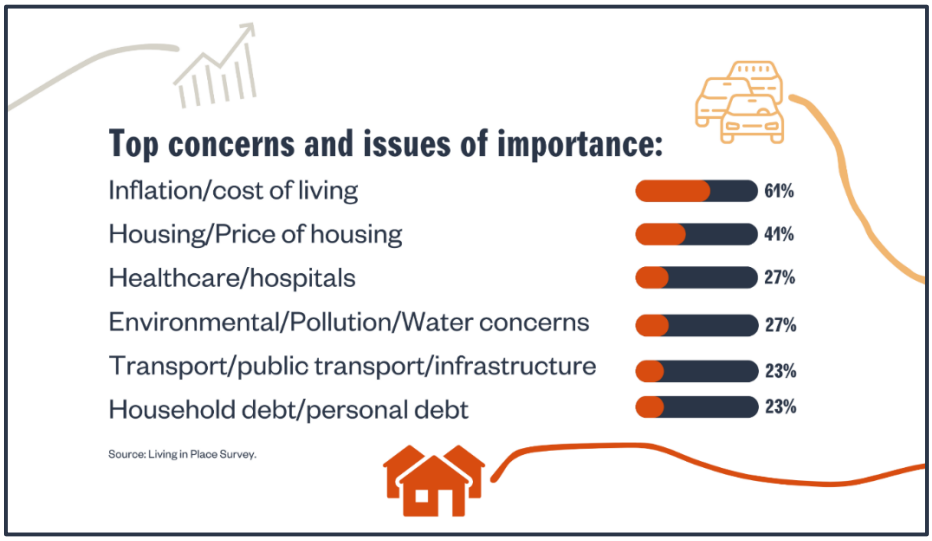


Figure 44 - North East Precinct concerns

Of the 98 people that responded to this question, 74% (73) agreed or strongly agreed with these priorities for North East Precinct and 26% (25) disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Level of agreement	Percentage (number)
Agree or Strongly Agree	74% (73)
Disagree or Strongly Disagree	26% (25)

Figure 45 - level of agreement, North East Precinct concerns

Agree or Strongly Agree

There was general agreement that **cost of living** is a high concern, impacting everyone from young families to retirees. High interest rates and increasing utility bills are causing financial strain. There was general agreement that the cost of **housing and rent** are a part of this, with respondents worried about younger generations and their ability to stay in the area.

For people in North East Precinct, access to **healthcare** services, including hospitals and GPs, is a major concern. People mentioned long wait times and difficulties finding doctors locally. While not a local government responsibility, there were also concerns about the overall state of our health system.

The **natural environment** continues to be a concern for respondents, with some people ranking it above cost of living. There is a desire for Council to focus more on environmental and pollution concerns and water quality.

Similar to the conversation on **public transport** as a priority, people said that better connections and infrastructure are needed, including connectivity with bike and walking paths.

Some people stressed that Council needs to focus on **basic services** like maintaining public facilities, fixing potholes and improving local resources. In addition, some people are concerned about vulnerable community members and said Council should be delivering **outreach services** to support them.

Disagree or Strongly Disagree

There was general concern about the availability of **healthcare** services, especially afterhours care, with some people ranking healthcare higher than cost of living and housing.

Similarly, a number of people ranked **natural environment** as their top concern, emphasising the need for environmental preservation and addressing pollution and climate change. The importance of long-term health and well-being is highlighted.

While some respondents felt that **cost of living** does not affect them personally, there was recognition of the impact for younger generations. **Housing affordability** and **personal debt** were seen to be linked to the broader issue of cost of living.

Respondents felt that **public transport** is a concern to the extent that better infrastructure and connectivity are needed to increase access to services and help reduce costs associated with commuting.

There was some suggestion that certain issues, such as **inflation**, are beyond the control of local government.

4. Health and Wellbeing

To understand people's views on health and wellbeing in North East Precinct, we presented the following data from the Living in Place Survey and asked two questions:

1. Is there anything else you want to tell us about the health and wellbeing of people in North East Precinct?
2. What's one thing Council could do differently to improve the health and wellbeing of people in North East Precinct?

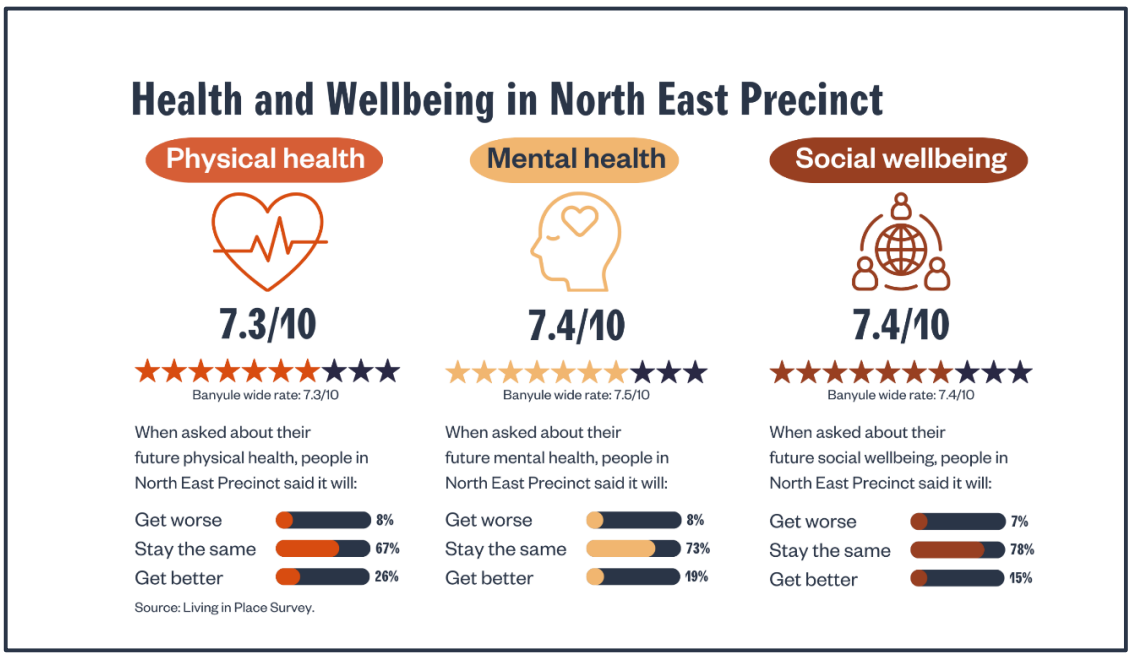


Figure 46 - Health and Wellbeing in North East Precinct

Responses for North East Precinct have been analysed and highlighted these health and wellbeing themes:

1. **Physical environment including infrastructure**
    - There is a strong emphasis on maintaining and enhancing green spaces, as they contribute significantly to mental and physical health.
    - The need for improved infrastructure, particularly in terms of safe and accessible walking paths and parks, is also evident. Residents have called for better maintenance of footpaths and parks and more attention to ensuring the safety of those exercising on the streets and in parks, particularly ensuring that surfaces are maintained in good condition to avoid trips and falls.
    - Furthermore, there is a call for the preservation of the natural environment amid urban development pressures. Residents are concerned about the loss of trees and green spaces due to construction and roadworks. Ensuring the preservation of these spaces is seen as crucial for community wellbeing.
2. **Improving wellbeing**
    - North East residents emphasised the urgent need to address mental health issues in the community. They cited various contributing factors, including socioeconomic challenges, age-related concerns, post-COVID-19 struggles and the lack of adequate mental health resources.
    - Many believe that mental health is deteriorating, especially among young people, and stressed the importance of providing proactive support and accessible services.
3. **Health care services**
    - There is a strong call for better access to mental health services with more affordable options.
    - Respondents spoke about the gaps in local mental health services and community groups for young adults with diverse needs.

5. Projects

The following list of proposed advocacy, capital works and infrastructure projects to take place in North East Precinct was included in the survey and presented to people at pop-ups to ask the level to which they agreed that the projects would have a positive impact on livability, health and wellbeing.

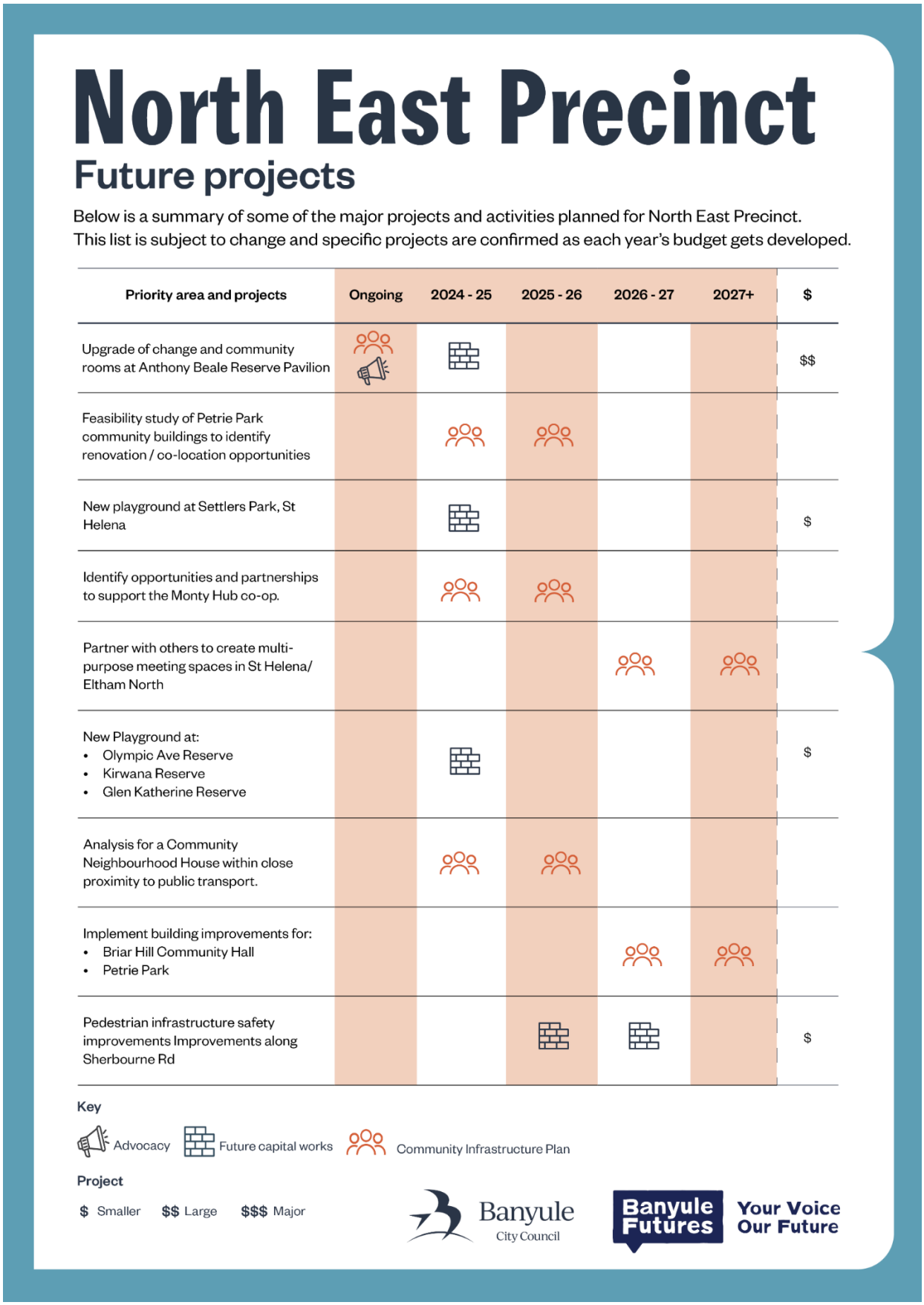


Figure 47 - North East Precinct projects

Of the 113 people that responded to this question, 68% (77) agreed or strongly agreed with these projects for North East Precinct, 23% (26) disagreed or strongly disagreed and 9% (10) said they did not know or could not say.

Level of agreement	Percentage (number)
Agree or Strongly Agree	68% (77)
Disagree or Strongly Disagree	23% (26)
Don't know/can't say	9% (10)

Figure 48 - level of agreement, North East Precinct projects

Agree or Strongly Agree

There is broad support amongst these respondents for the proposed projects and general appreciation for the consideration taken to support a wide range of community needs.

People said that they were happy to see the proposed **playground works** and stressed the importance of fenced playgrounds, shade cloth, water fountains, toilets and adult exercise equipment. The proposed **neighbourhood house projects** also received support.

With regard to **Petrie Park**, there was support for the building improvements and other suggestions to include the outdoor space including better landscaping for accessibility, improved pathways an addressing safety concerns due to speeding cars.

There were some calls for **more environmentally focussed projects** and for green space projects not to be compromised for infrastructure projects.

Monty Hub was also mentioned, with mixed feelings about its support and a sense that it has been neglected in the past in favour of other projects.

Disagree or Strongly Disagree

Respondents that disagreed or strongly disagreed that these projects will have a positive impact on the livability, health and wellbeing of people in North East Precinct felt that many of the projects will not impact them personally. Others felt that the focus on **playgrounds** and **buildings** is misplaced and that money could be better spent elsewhere, with some saying that playgrounds are rarely used and are prone to vandalism.

It was said that it is important to focus on **environmental projects**, including the protection of the existing tree canopy, biodiversity partnerships and minimising rain runoff by planting more trees and shrubs.

Overall, there was a sense that **maintenance and safety of existing infrastructure is valued over new**, including footpaths, parkland paths and roads.

There is a general desire to see projects that **enhance connectivity** through cycling and walking paths in an effort to reduce reliance on cars and enhance community mobility.

Don't know/can't say

Of the 9% that said they did not know or could not say their level of agreement, some said that the projects would not change their lives, while others said that they did not have enough information about how these projects were decided over others to be able to comment.